**Interviewee: Jo Ann Marshall**
**Interviewer: Thomas Saylor**
**Date of interview: 23 May 2001**
**Location of interview: living room of the Marshall home, Cloquet, MN**
**Transcribed by: Daniel Borkenhagen, August 2001**
**Edited by: Thomas Saylor, September 2001**

Jo Ann Marshall was born on 8 December 1921 in Cloquet, Minnesota. She graduated from Cloquet High School in 1939 and completed a two-year degree program at the University of Minnesota-Duluth in 1941. When the United States entered World War II in 1941, Jo Ann decided to search for a way to aid in the war effort. After thinking about the Navy, she considered several options before accepting a position as a fingerprint analyst with the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington, D.C., a job she held from 1942-44.

While working in the nation's capital, Jo Ann met her husband, Lester Marshall, of Washington, D.C., and they were married in October 1943 in Cloquet. In October 1945 Jo Ann and Lester moved to Cloquet, where they raised a family.

Jo Ann passed away on 2 December 2012, six days before her 91st birthday.

Jo Ann's interview provides an interesting and detailed view of everyday life during wartime in the nation's capital, 1942-45.

**<u>Interview key</u>:**
**J: Jo Ann Marshall**
**T: Thomas Saylor**
**[text] = words added by editor, either for clarification or explanation**
**(***) = words or phrase unclear**
**NOTE: interview has been edited for clarity**

**Tape 1, Side A. Counter begins at 000.**

T: This is an interview for the Oral History Project of the World War II Years. My name is Thomas Saylor. Today is 23 May 2001, and I am in Cloquet, Minnesota, speaking with Jo Ann Marshall. Jo Ann, I want to thank you publicly for agreeing to sit down and answer some questions for this oral history project. We've already gone through a little biographical data so I know where you were born, in this very house. And that with a couple of years exception in Washington, you've lived in Cloquet almost all your life. The first thing I want to ask you--you mentioned you'd had a junior college course in Duluth--by the summer of 1941, you'd decided to go down to the University [of Minnesota] in Minneapolis. Do you remember where you were and what you were doing when you heard the news about Pearl Harbor?

J: I was home. My neighbor across the street heard it first and came and told us.

T: So they'd been listening to the radio, and apparently had heard the news. Do you remember how they reacted when they came over to the house?

J: Excited. Terrified.

T: How did you react then, for example, when you read the papers the next day, or heard the radio?

J: Upset. To think the Japs would do that. No, I didn't mean that. *(pauses four seconds)* Well, it was upsetting anyway.

T: Well, here's a St. Paul paper *(displays front page of 8 December 1941).* Here's one of the headlines. I expect the Duluth paper was pretty similar.

J: Yes.

T: How'd your folks react?

J: Well, of course my dad having been in World War I, was very upset.

T: So he served in the Army in World War I?

J: The Marines. After he left the United States, they sent him first to England, and after he was there for a while, they sent him to France. But he was never at the

front, because he was French and knew enough of the French language that he could find his way around Paris, and so he was a messenger. They didn't have the communications then that they do now. And he said he often went around Paris, with, they wore leggings in those days, and the messages in his leggings. So he went delivering messages that way.

T: So he was French?

J: He was French. And German, but… he never knew German. His mother was German, but he did know French, because there was French people in Cloquet, that's why. He would meet these French people and they would greet each other, "Commes' es soi" So he kept a little French in his head, so he could pick it up, and he was taught a little more after he got there. I don't know that for sure, but that's where he spent his time during the war. First in London, and then in Paris.

T: So he had memories of the first war. He was too old to be drafted into the second one.

J: That's right.

T: Okay. Let's talk about how your life might have changed after war was declared. That's the paper from 8 December 1941 *(displays front page of a St. Paul newspaper)* in St. Paul. How did you feel your life changed after 7 December 1941?

J: I'm trying to think what I was doing myself. I guess I began thinking about what could I do? I considered going into the Navy. *(pauses four seconds)* It was kind of a hard time.

T: Were you getting encouragement from your family or from your folks to contribute in some active way?

J: I suppose. Probably from my father. I doubt that they wanted to see me leave home, but being I had an aunt where I was going [Washington, D.C.], I guess they thought it was alright. And I don't think at that time they realized that the nation's capital was in danger. Because we didn't know about the U-boats within distance of the United States. We didn't know about gas rationing; you know, we couldn't get gas through the states, they had to go through the ocean and come up the East Coast. They were in danger, the submarines.

The building where I worked was all blacked out, and had black curtains at the windows. There was a radar, what do I want to say, a patrol in our neighborhood to see that everyone had their drapes drawn and there was no lights, and so, they were taking a lot of precautions. It was necessary, we didn't really realize it at the time, but we found out afterwards we were in more danger than we thought we were.

T: Do you think that some experiences or some feelings from those war years have stayed with you, or stayed with you after the war was over?

J: I think whenever you hear about what's going on in the world, you think, "Oh my!" You have been through that, not to the extent that they have now, but you think how dangerous the world really is. I mean, before that, I was young and I didn't think about war or anything. I heard some stories from my dad, but not too much about the First World War. I remember him telling me that when he came back, the ship that he was on rolled so far that if it had rolled any farther, it would have sunk. He said, he ripped all the pictures he had out of the album and put them in his pocket. I don't know if the ship had sunk if it would have done any better in his pocket, but that's what he did.

T: There must have been some seasick guys on that boat. He came back then probably in 1919? You know, I was really curious when I first talked to you, to hear that you worked for the FBI during World War II. I was wondering if you could just say a bit about what your job entailed.

J: I was in fingerprint, a house classifier. When I first went to work, they showed us how to do it. You had to count all those little ridges and use a magnifying glass. They had a table and I worked nights. All the curtains were dark. It was just before Christmas [1942], and boy, I was lonesome.

T: So when did this start, during 1942?

J: Yes. They would play music at night for us. I don't know if they played it at night for the girls… in the daytime, but at night. And when they play, when you're a long way from home, that was murder. And I hadn't worked there too very long, when the files got so crowded that they couldn't have any more room and they moved the filing department to the armory in Washington. That was a great big building and there you were, in this great big building with this big high ceiling and rows and rows of filers.

T: All doing the same thing that you were doing?

J: All doing the same thing I was doing.

T: Was this criminal work, or was it defense related work?

J: It was. They fingerprinted everyone in the United States, anything that you went to do. In Washington, they even fingerprinted people when they cashed a check. They were so alert to everything that was going on. I don't know anybody that was fingerprinted. I'd go from the file of that'd state what I was doing and oh, here's Les Markman, for example, sure, I know him. He was already in the service by the time I got the file, his prints to file. So I sent him a Christmas card, because I knew where he was.

T: So you classified people from all walks of life then.

J: Yes. And every once in a while there would be a box of fingerprints filed that were up above where you were and you were supposed to be very cautious when you did those prints, because there were people that had contagious diseases. If somebody was, had something that you could catch, they wanted to be sure that you knew that, and you washed your hands after you'd handled those files.

T: You weren't in uniform?

J: No.

T: You were a civilian employee of the FBI?

J: Yes. And I was in Hoover's office, but he wasn't there. They were going to take us all to meet him, but he had something else to do.

T: So you never did get to meet J. Edgar Hoover.

J: I never got to meet him.

T: You mentioned there were a lot of people doing similar work to you.

J: Yes, there were many of us. There was one girl that I lived with, was from South Carolina, one from Texas, I was from Minnesota, and the other one was from Iowa.

T: So they were from all over, and drove to Washington?

J: They were advertising all over the United States for help.

T: Were the people doing your type of work mainly females, or was there a mix?

J: Female, all female.

T: Jo Ann, how did you perceive of your rate of pay for this job? Did you think you were well paid comparatively?

J: Yes. We were paid in cash.

T: Every week, month?

J: I think… I can't remember, maybe two weeks or months. I'm not sure. It was cash. I always thought that was funny. I had never known anybody that got paid in cash.

T: But they paid you in cash, so there was a pay window or something?

J: I can't even remember that.

T: Let's talk about the prices in Washington. Did your pay go very far?

J: Oh yes, I made enough money so that I paid my folks back for my fare out there, and of course, things were cheaper in those days, too. [My husband] Lester could tell you how much I made, $60. Every time I got paid, I think it was $60. I forget how often it was, but, I thought I was getting paid well.

T: Of course, with younger students these days, we talk about how much people earned and they say, "How could they afford anything?" They forget that prices were matched.

J: I didn't have any trouble with finances.

T: You say you were married in '43, but that you had met Lester a year before that.

J: I had met him shortly after I was in Washington. My aunts lived in Washington, and Lester's folks lived just a few doors from where my aunt lived. My aunt was… I guess she tried to be a matchmaker or what, but she asked me one day if I wanted to go to… I don't remember the town, and I don't remember the name of the restaurant, but I said sure. It was a Sunday afternoon and I thought, "Sure, I'd like to go." They were going for a lunch or something. And she says, "By the way, Lest[er] Marshall is going along too." And Lester's father had met me on the bus when we were going to work. He worked in downtown Washington. He was a tax collector and I was working in the FBI, and he we met on the bus. And he got home and mentioned something about he met a nice girl on the bus. And Joe took him up on that I guess, so Lester was asked to go on this bus ride, or with this couple for lunch that Sunday. Gas was rationed unless this was (****) in the car, since a time, gas rationing was worse in Washington than it was here. And Lester tried to chicken out, but his mother wouldn't let him, so we met on the car ride up to Francis… well, it was a famous restaurant in Washington, outside of Washington.

T: So that is 1942?

J: That was 1942, and that started the whole thing.

T: And you were married the next year, '43?

J: Yes.

T: Once you were married, both of you stayed in Washington?

J: Yes, Lester got his discharge from the Navy Guard, because I always said I wanted to come back to Minnesota and Lester always said, "I don't like Washington D.C., I would like to skip town." I don't know if this was why, but he was always cautious of Mar's sisters going out at night, and it was, more time there than I was ever aware of. And he didn't like the climate, he had sinus trouble and he was all game for leaving for Minnesota, so that suited me fine.

T: Between 1943 and 1945, did you two have an apartment or a house in Washington?

J: Yes, we lived first in, you might say, a one-room apartment, it was one room and a kitchen. With a bathroom across the hall in a private home. We got tired of that, so the fact of the matter is Lester's mother found this place for us while we were in Minnesota getting married. So then, after a few months we figured we need more space and we found an apartment in a private home that was made into apartments. And we got a very small apartment, but we at least had a separate bedroom from the living room and a kitchen that was, you call a Pullman's kitchen. I guess you'd say it was… you couldn't eat in it, you couldn't hardly turn around in it. Stove on one end and refrigerator on the other and the sink between and a couple of counters, little bit of counter space and then you had to eat in the living room.

T: Was it hard to find housing?

J: Yes.

T: And what you did find, was it more expensive than you might have thought it should be?

J: I guess you'd have to ask Lester that, because I don't remember anything about the rent.

T: But it was hard to find a place?

J: Yes, but the FBI originally found us places to stay. I don't know how come they were so good at that, but we, all four of us girls of the FBI, lived in one apartment, and we didn't have to go hunting for an apartment. They were very selective of who they hired, and they investigated you thoroughly before they hired you, and they called my girlfriend who lived right across the street and drilled her to high heaven, she said. And they said, "Does she smoke?" And Irene says, "No, she doesn't smoke." "Are you sure?" "Yes, I'm sure." And I always thought, just because I didn't smoke, I got a chance to go to Washington. *(laughs)* Because my girlfriend in the back applied at the same time and she didn't get chosen and I thought, she smoked. I don't if there was any other reason, because you had to fill out a questionnaire.

T: Now, you didn't change jobs during the war, did you? You changed locations, I think you said, but not the job itself.

J: No.

T: While being in Washington, did the war seem to affect the community in Washington?

J: Why, I can imagine it did. Everybody was cautious about their lights at night, particularly, nobody… they had wardens; Lester was a warden, he wore a metal cap when he went out at night to check the neighborhood to see that nobody was showing any light. They were very cautious. They knew they were…

T: Do you think if you had wanted to switch jobs you could have found something else. Were there other employment opportunities around in Washington in those days?

J: Well I suppose there were. I never gave it a thought. I suppose the men went off to work, the women had to take their jobs. It seemed like any place you were, there were a lot of women in stores.

T: So you remember seeing women working jobs that might have been…?

J: Yes.

T: I'm going to show you a couple of things here, some poster reprints *(shares color reprints of WW II posters, in a notebook)* kind of things that were advertising for women. Obviously here's a machinist, and there's a women secretary. Have you ever seen "Jenny on the Job" posters, like these?

J: I don't recall. My mother went to work. She worked in Duluth, in the shipyards. She made more money working at the shipyards than Lester made working at the Navy yards.

T: You're kidding. Did they move to Duluth or did she go back and forth [from Cloquet]?

J: Back and forth. They carpooled from Cloquet, and she and a friend went to apply and she got chosen, but her friend didn't. She was too old or something. She was a huge woman, but I don't know if that was the only reason, but then… so we had carpool.

T: Did your dad work during the war too?

J: He still worked at the paper company.

T: So your mom decided to…

J: … and my dad worked at the… he had some job that he had during the war efforts, and I can't really put my finger on how to tell you what he did, but my dad was a sociable fellow so he got around town and did things.

T: But your mom worked. Was she working full time up there at the shipyards?

J: Yes.

T: She did that just during the war years?

J: Yes. She said that she was a sweeper, for one thing, and when they were going to unload something, they formed a long line and no one person carried something all the way, they passed it on to the other.

T: What was that all about?

J: I don't know. I figure they figured that it was too strenuous for women to carry anything, and it was better to line them up and pass it right along.

T: Were they constructing ships up here at the shipyard [in Duluth]?

J: Yes. Liberty ships, I'm pretty sure that's what it was.

T: Jo Ann, did you buy war bonds?

J: Oh yes.

T: Was that something that people felt that they should do, or that they wanted to do?

J: Well, I wanted to.

T: How did that work? Was it deducted from your pay automatically or did you have pay cash for them?

J: I can't remember that. Ask Lester, he had some.

T: I'll ask you something else then… you were married in 1943, so were you buying your own groceries and cooking at home then for a couple of years?

J: Yes.

T: So did you come into contact with ration stamps and ration coupons and stuff like that?

J: Yes, people were trading back and forth. My mother wanted sugar above coffee, and she traded with [our neighbor] Mrs. Lehman who wanted coffee more than she wanted sugar.

T: So people would trade these coupons back and forth?

J: Yes.

T: I have something here, I wonder if any of these *(shares copies of wartime ration coupons in notebook)*, they're copies, but here's a rationing poster and, if you just turn [the page of the notebook] there's a rubber footwear purchase certificate.

J: I never knew that.

T: I think there's some sugar [coupons] in there, too. A fuel oil ration for fuel for your home. What else do we have here, there's a sugar allowance coupon. So those are the kind of things you say your mom would trade for?

J: Yes. She'd rather have the sugar coupons than the coffee coupons. And Lester's mother would, his mother always wanted butter, "and don't give me any margarine."

T: Was butter hard to come by?

J: Yes.

T: How'd they come up with the butter?

J: I don't know, but they mixed with margarine to stretch it, and Lester's dad never caught on until the war was over. He had been eating margarine, but they mixed it with butter. And the margarine in those days, it came in a plastic bag and there was a capsule in there with the coloring, and if you didn't want to color it you didn't have to use it, but if you wanted it colored, you took the bag and squeezed the…

T: What color was it normally, white?

J: White. Then they had it colored and that was fine with Lester's mother, because that's what she put in.

T: Some of those other stamps there *(motions again to the notebook)* are ration coupons. Did you have a ration book of your own when you lived in Washington? Did you have ration stamps?

J: Why sure. Coupons, I think there were buttons. I'll look in here *(looks down at notebook)* and see.

T: That's the end of the section here on ration coupons. So what do you remember being rationed?

J: Meat.

T: Was meat hard to come by?

J: I don't remember that it was hard to come by, but you could only get so much for so many coupons.

T: And sugar you mentioned, you had coupons for that, and coffee. Was there any kind of black market, do you remember? Did people really, did you get the impression, obey the ration stamp system, or were there other things going on, so that you could pretty much get what you wanted?

J: No, not where I was. I think my dad had something to do with the ration business. I don't know. Because you see, I was gone, part of the time.

T: The Office of Price Administration covered the rationing.

J: Well, my dad had something to do with it. Not that he got any more coupons, but he was just that kind of a person. And my mother rolled bandages for the Red Cross.

T: Your mom was pretty busy, it sounds like. She was working full time at the shipyard for a while, and back here in the community, too.

J: Maybe it was now and then. First it was Red Cross, then it was shipyard, I don't know, but I know that she did both of those things. We [Lester and I] came home [in 1943] and just surprised my folks. We got a ride with a fellow that had just enough gas to drive, but he wanted somebody to go along to share the expenses.

T: He was driving all the way from Washington?

J: Yes.

T: That was '43, you said, when you came home. You got married in Cloquet, right?

J: Yes. There was something I was going to say about that episode, but it just slipped my mind as I was talking about it.

T: That was a way for him to gain a little bit of help paying for the expenses, and for you folks not to have to ride the train.

J: Yes.

T: Jo Ann, were you and Lester better or worse off financially during the war?

J: With the both of us working… I didn't work all the time while I was married, because we must have felt we were fine financially stable, because he didn't want his wife to work. So, I quit after we were married a while. After a while I got tired of staying home, and I got a job at the bank. In Washington, at Riggs National Bank. I worked on the book keeping machine.

T: That was full time work too?

J: Yes.

T: Did you and Lester go to church when you lived in Washington?

J: Oh yes.

T: Did you both belong to the same church, only after you were married, or before, too?

J: Well, sometimes we went to the Presbyterian church that was close to where I lived, and sometimes we went to the church where he regularly went. But they had social activities for young people at the church where I lived, so we went there for that. And we went to his church with this folks, and that was a Presbyterian church the other direction.

T: So that was his family church before he had met you.

J: Then he became a Lutheran when he came to Minnesota. He liked the Lutheran church better than the Presbyterian and I did too, because I didn't like that he [the minister] was talking about… Columbus, or something that didn't have anything to do with church, and I thought, "What's that got to do with being in church?" I didn't know that, maybe it wasn't Columbus, but it was somebody that wasn't related to the church. And I thought, "What's the big idea?" And Lester felt the same way, so when we came here, he never did go to the Presbyterian church, he just went to the Lutheran church with me.

T: And that's the one you're still members of today?

J: Yes. My mother was born in Cloquet, she belonged to that church; her parents were early members when the church was founded, before it was probably even organized. My mother tells about the time that my aunt Judith was sitting in there. My grandma was sitting there and she had the baby with her and my grandmother got so involved in the message that she dropped the baby on the floor. And they were sitting around a coal stove. Well, what kind of buildings they had, when the immigrants came to the United States, my grandmother came here when she was 60 years old, from Sweden, all by herself. Her brothers had come before and they sent her the money to come. And they left Sweden and they left their mother behind and

their father. And when their father died and mother got older, she had no children in Sweden, she had to be taken care of by strangers. Because they all emigrated.

T: So mom, did she ultimately die in Sweden?

J: Her husband had evidently died previously, and when she was not capable of taking care of herself, I think grandma always felt bad about that, but there was no going back. They weren't so prosperous over here as they thought they were, it was better than Sweden, but… My grandfather worked in the lumber industry, first in Wiskegen and then in Cloquet.

T: So your family roots go back in Cloquet pretty darn far. Let's get back to your church in Washington, the couple years you were there, either church you went to. Do you remember them sponsoring any kind of volunteer programs to aid in the war effort?

J: Yes. One thing they did that Lester's grandmother was there at the time, they would cut stamps from envelopes; they'd collect envelopes and cut the stamps, for stamp collectors. And I remember that, and they knitted things for sailors, sweaters I know, and like I say, my mother rolled bandages. And what did Lester's mother do? I imagine the same.

T: Think of the message on Sunday morning, do you recall the message in the pulpit changing with the war? Did the war impact the words, what you heard on Sunday morning?

J: I can't remember that. I can imagine it would.

T: Some have very specific memories of a political message in some ways, being very anti-German or anti-Japanese and remember those kind of things and hearing those kinds of things, and other people don't.

J: I'm sure it was mentioned, how terrible things were and that we should all pitch in, but I can't see, I told you I had a poor memory.

T: You've told me an awful lot so far, I'll have to tell you. Let's step back here for a couple of questions. Think about the time you were working in Washington, before you met Lester, before you were married. What was an average day for you like? You worked nights all the time?

J: Not all the time. I first started on days and then I worked nights. Lester worked nights, too, some of the time. And when I was still on days, Lester would call me up in the morning to wake me up, because we were those four girls in the apartment and none of us had an alarm clock. *(laughs)*

T: So he was your alarm clock.

J: He was our alarm clock.

T: So what time did you start work in the morning, when you worked during the day?

J: Nine to five I suppose, maybe a little longer than that. They worked shifts. Somebody was working days and somebody was working nights.

T: Did you take the bus or streetcar to work?

J: Oh yes, public transportation. Gas was so rationed that Lester's dad could never drive to work. If they did drive to work, they had to carpool, but no, Lester's dad always took the bus.

T: You mentioned a few moments ago that the gas rationing in Washington was more severe than here in Minnesota.

J: Yes.

T: Do you remember your folks being able to get gas during the war years? Because your mom was driving to Duluth.

J: They were carpooled. I suppose there was pipeline that they could get gas from Texas, but they didn't. They were getting gas going to the ocean. And so that's where they were stymied on the gas.

T: Were those trains and streetcars in the morning pretty crowded?

J: Oh sure. Lots of people were working.

T: So you got your phone call to wake up in the morning. Did you have breakfast at home, or was there breakfast served at your place of work?

J: No, we had breakfast at home, and there was a cart that came around, so you could get your lunch. I could remember hard boiled eggs.

T: This was pushed around through the offices?

J: Yes.

T: Did you often take your lunch, or did you like this lunch cart coming around

J: I liked the lunch cart, I think. I remember his eggs, hard boiled eggs I thought, that was new to me. I don't remember packing a lunch, so there was some way of getting lunch.

T: Did you and your roommates, did they stay the same for the time you lived there, or did people come and go?

J: No, we were four of us together the whole time.

T: Did you cook for each other at home for dinner? Was there one big dinner or did you sort of…

J: I was sent to the delicatessen, next door. Why? Because it was Jewish people that ran the delicatessen, and I was the one that looked more Jewish than the others *(laughs)*, and I certainly think they did think I was Jewish. I had a girlfriend that was Jewish, and I don't know if I picked anything up from her or not, but they always thought that I came home with the best results when I went to the delicatessen. Of course, we had to go to the supermarket for most things, but you'd come home and there was nothing to eat in the house, so the delicatessen is next door, so, "Jo Ann, go get us something to eat." And then we depended on Lester a little bit too.

T: How did he help out?

J: He'd stop at the baker on the way over.

T: So he called you in the morning to wake you up, and then also went to the bakery for you.

J: Yes, when he came to call, we'd go out or something. Those long things that are filled with chocolate, chocolate eclairs, and there was something cherry, too, that we liked, and so he'd stop and bring that. I suppose it was a cherry pie. So it was always something from the bakery that he would stop and get.

T: This delicatessen next door. Did you find that it was generally pretty well stocked with what you wanted?

J: Yes.

T: So you didn't notice any real shortages.

J: I know that when bananas came into the grocery store, women would fight over the bananas.

T: So those apparently weren't seen every day.

J: No, I think the same thing with the bananas as with the fuel oil that came by boat. And Lester always talked about how many things before the war came by boat, because his father worked in downtown Washington. And he'd always come home

with things that he could pick up at the wharf, because things came into Washington a lot by boat.

T: He'll have some things to say about [in our interview later today].

J: He may correct me a little bit. *(laughs)* But I remember the bananas. I was at the grocery store in our neighborhood and that was a great treat and they were always fighting over the bananas.

T: The place you lived before you got there. What kind of neighborhood was that?

J: It was a nice neighborhood. We lived in a very nice apartment. The FBI, as I said, had a hand in where we lived. It was right on the streetcar track. I think I did have to change streetcars, but other than that, the streetcar went right downtown, right where I worked.

T: So it was pretty convenient.

J: You know, Washington is laid out in a circle. There was one of the girls that was always getting lost.

**End of Side A. Side B begins.**

J: So one day she was complaining about getting lost, didn't know where she was going. I said, "Well, I'll show you." And I thought to myself, "Am I sure about this?" As luck would have it, I was always pretty good with directions. We made it, but around Washington there's so many circles that have statues in it, and if you go by the one with the great big headed horse with the man sitting on it, then you're headed in the right direction. And how many of those there were, lots of them, but I managed.

T: So you couldn't just tell someone to go to the statue and turn right.

J: No, because you got to know which statue it was you had to turn at. They were always getting confused with those circles and those statues.

T: Do you feel that that neighborhood changed during the war, during the time you lived there?

J: I know that us girls lived in that apartment, we were friends, and that's the only friends we had. There was no associating with anybody else.

T: In your house, or neighborhood?

J: In the apartment, no. I didn't know anybody except Lester and his folks, and the girls I went with, and the girls at work, but the girls at work were all scattered.

They… one of the girls when she first came there, she was directed by the FBI to the YWCA and, of course, I went to my aunt's and then that wasn't too many days until we all ended up there, but we didn't know each other before, and we were just all like assigned a place to stay.

T: So they found your roommates for you too?

J: Yes.

T: So not just the apartment, but the people who were in it.

J: Because we didn't… I didn't know anybody from here and neither did they, so we're from scattered… They just, how they managed to pick who went where, it was just (***), I don't know. We got along very well together. There was an older girl who was like the mother, and there was a younger girl that needed mothering. She didn't know how to wash her nylons, I don't think. Of course, there wasn't nylons, it was silk stockings or how we even got those, but there was no nylons, that all went to make parachutes.

T: So if people had nylons, they had to make them last, I guess.

J: And if you had a nylon that got a run in it, that was a catastrophe.

T: Could you fix a run in a nylon stocking?

J: You know, before I went to Washington, we weren't wearing nylons. They had just kind of come out shortly before that. My dad had a little thing that was kind of like a crochet hook, only it had a little hinge on it, and he could take that thing and mend mine and my mother's hose with it. You'd get to a certain point where of course you had to fasten it off some way, with a knot some way. And there were people that did that for other people. They had machines evidently that did it, but when I got to Washington, none of us knew how to do that. But my dad worked at the paper mill. And his job was to fix a wire, they always called it. He had to go sew a wire, he (***) me off and called in because he had to go sew this wire, and the paper machine had a wire mesh, and if the mesh tore, somebody had to go fix it. And my dad was the best one at the paper mill to do it, because he just was handy at that. So I guess because he could sew a wire, he figured he could mend a nylon.

T: A good skill to have it sounds like.

J: They don't have wires anymore, something new, plastics have come in, and things like that.

T: Of course with plastics, they do so much now, that…

J: I don't know just what it is, but I know that they used have belts on the machine and they were wool belts, and when they'd get just so worn they couldn't be used anymore, they'd tear these belts off and rip them up in blanket size pieces. I don't know, I've still got a paper mill belt upstairs. They sent them away to have them dyed and have the edges sewn overcast.

T: Putting things to use.

J: They have nothing like that anymore; the machines are newer and better and faster.

T: I was reading the wonderful Cloquet *Pine Knot* last evening, and I'm wondering… This is the *Pine Knot*'s headline for the day President Roosevelt died *(points at copy of Pine Knot front page from April 1945)*. That was in April of 1945. You were still living in Washington then.

J: I went to the procession, I was there. There were scads of people. They climbed trees if they had to.

T: What kind of an impact did that have on you individually, President Roosevelt dying?

J: Oh, *(three second pause)* I guess I was a Roosevelt fan, and I cried along with the rest of the people there.

T: For the procession you mean?

J: Yes.

T: What kind of procession was there in Washington?

J: Horses, horse drawn carriages. Lots of watchers.

T: Was that a work day? Do you remember?

J: It must have been. By the crowds of people that were there, I don't imagine I was working, I imagine the government offices were closed.

T: You weren't working for the FBI anymore by that point?

J: No.

T: Were there a lot of people?

J: There were scads of people.

T: How about the people you worked with? Was it something that impacted them as well, do you think?

J: I don't remember being there with the girls I worked with, but I must have been. I just remember what a day it was, being there. Lester wasn't there. I suppose in defense work, he had to work. Lots of colored people there. Of course, there are a lot of colored people in Washington, but there was a surprising lot of colored people there.

T: Why do you think that was?

J: *(pauses four seconds)* I suppose they liked his policies, what he was doing. You know, Mrs. Roosevelt was all for the colored people. She got Marian Anderson to sing at the, one of the memorial buildings. I know no other colored person had gotten that privilege. So she kind of broke the color barrier, and she was there.

T: It wasn't long after that that the war ended. At least the war in Europe. Here's a… this is from the Duluth *News Tribune*, that was 8 May 1945. *(points to copy of newspaper front page)*

J: Where'd you find all the newspapers?

T: At the Minnesota History Center there in St. Paul. They've got the Cloquet *Pine Knot* back as far as it goes on microfilm. I was surprised how many papers they've got. They had a couple of Duluth papers, Cloquet, papers from [Minnesota] cities I'd never even heard of.

J: Where is this you say?

T: The Minnesota History Center, in St. Paul.

J: Minnesota History Center. I have to remember that. My cousin was married to one of the descendants of the founders of the *Pine Knot*. I can't think of their names, honestly. When you get to be this age, memory, and especially names, Catherine and… what was her name, it was her father. It was my cousin's mother-in-law's father that was the original owner. He was the beginning of the *Pine Knot*.

T: The *Pine Knot* is still published, correct?

J: Yes. It's weekly. That's what I have to do, I have to remember to tell Carla that if she wants any old issues of the *Pine Knot*, that's where they got them.

T: Now you were also in Washington for V-J Day, on 15 August 1945. This *(shares another newspaper headline)* is the St. Paul *Dispatch*, a local St. Paul paper. Was there a big headline like that, do you remember, in the Washington papers, too?

J: Oh, I'm sure there was. That was a day to remember, too. Everybody went downtown. Oh, there was a big…

T: This photo *(shares St. Paul newspaper headline from V-J Day)* is downtown St. Paul, and it could be lots of places. I'm wondering what kind of memories you have of Washington on VJ-Day?

J: Just like that *(gestures at newspaper front page, at photo of downtown St. Paul)*. Crowds of people.

T: Did it seemed to be a planned kind of thing, or very spontaneous?

J: Spontaneous. Everyone went downtown.

T: Was there a certain place in Washington that the people congregated? In St. Paul they went down to Seventh and Wabasha, and in Minneapolis it was Nicollet Mall. What was it in Washington?

J: Well, you see the downtown in Washington, the government buildings, were just a couple blocks from the downtown district. There's a whole row of government buildings, and I can't remember the streets, must… Lester can say more about that. I know, Lester wasn't there with me. And it was just *(pauses three seconds)* anybody that was in the military that happened to be in Washington at the time was downtown. I think I saw a sailor up in the tree. That was a day. A lot of people there.

T: Let me ask you a kind of a philosophical question: How did the war change your life?

J: *(pauses four seconds)* It got me married. *(laughs)*

T: Very specifically it did, didn't it? You never would have met Lester, would you?

J: No, I never would have met him, if I hadn't gone to Washington. I had been in Washington once before to visit my aunt and I had met Lester's sister and, I don't know, it just happened. I guess she was going to be a matchmaker, and I suppose he figured out I was alone in Washington, and no friends, and she introduced me to Lester and, of course, I had known his sister before, but I'd only been there for like two weeks. I went out to visit my aunt one time and I didn't meet Lester then.

T: You only met him when you went to work there. That's a pretty big change, any other ways that you think the experience as a whole kind of changed you as a person?

J: *(pauses five seconds)* I suppose I'm more interested in things that go on around me than I was before. I was young, and I wasn't thinking about anything other than

what was right here in Cloquet. When you get out in the big city and where there's *(pauses four seconds)* lot of military people, and they had these places to go to. You'd see a lot of USO, all over the place. Dances and lots of those sailors on the street. I suppose they shipped out form the East and they…

T: How about when you and Lester went back to Cloquet in 1945?

J: I was glad to be back. I guess I must have been lonesome. I always told my mother I was coming back because I was an only child, and she was having conniptions when I decided to go to Washington. She wouldn't stop me, but she didn't like the idea very much. She just figured that I would have left home forever. And I said no, I'm coming back. I wasn't really crazy about a big city. I don't know, my kids think, "Oh, big city, there's so much to do." When they get to the big city, and there's not so much more to do than there is right here. Like I said, my daughter lives in Minneapolis, there's no ice skating rink, there's no playground. The movie theaters are across town. There's nothing in these neighborhoods for the kids to do. And you come to Cloquet, and you can go down to the park, and there's a pool in the summertime and you can go swimming, and the lakes aren't too far apart, and there's not all the traffic, and so both of my kids want us to come and live where they live, and we don't want to. We want to stay in Cloquet.

My daughter from Virginia Beach comes regularly, her husband is an airplane pilot and she flies anyplace she wants to go, so I see her every summer. I see my daughter in Minneapolis more when we go there than when she comes here. Well, Lester had an appointment once with an eye doctor, and twice a year in Minneapolis, so we'd see her twice a year and we like that, and so, I suppose she's busy, she works, she's had kids. I suppose she's busier than I am, than we are, so we see more of her in Minneapolis than we see her in Cloquet.

T: Last question. First, what did you think of the war during the war years?

J: I thought it was horrible. *(pauses four seconds)* Nothing much more to say about it, other than it was just heartbreaking, and you were worried about all your relatives that were over in these places. I had one cousin that was over in the Pacific, and one that was over in Europe, and you just never knew if they were going to come back. I had a nurse friend over there, and when she came back, she was telling about the time they were being bombed and they all had to flee. She said they left their papers, she was a nurse, all her medical stuff, everything was destroyed. The wind came up with it, the confusion, they lost all their records. So it changed the lives for a lot of people.

T: When you think back now, 55 years later, what do you think of the war?

J: When I think about it, I think I'm glad it's not here. You just can't… I guess wars have always been with us, but… those poor Jews over in Palestine and the trouble they're having with the… And they're not the only ones, there's wars every once in a while, there's a new war breaking out someplace. So thankful to be in the United

States. I just hope nothing happens that we get involved in any wars any more than we have been. Some I think were probably necessary, but there's others you wonder about.

T: Was World War II one of those that was necessary?

J: I suppose.

T: Let me ask you, what else do you want to add? That's the final question.

J: I don't know as I want to ask anything. I was glad to meet you and glad you were here. I hope I was some help, but… Lester will be more help to you than I was. He's got a memory, he's got a better gift of gab. *(laughs)*

T: There's some things, particularly being in Washington, he'll have a nice contrast, before and after.

J: I should have looked at some of the pictures I had taken in Washington, it might have jogged my memory a little bit.

T: Let me thank you again for your time here today.

**END OF INTERVIEW**